

Keeping the promise of 6-day mail delivery
By Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin

The U.S. Postal Service has a rich and reliable history of serving the American public since the late 1700's. The first half of my life was spent on the family farm near Houghton, where my father still lives. I can remember as a child racing my brother to the mailbox as our rural carrier was coming up the road. It was a part of our routine and is a cherished memory. Just like so many of you are with your postal carrier, we felt our carrier was like a part of the family. Those relationships are one of the tangible benefits of being either a letter carrier or resident in a rural community.

That's why I can't support the recent proposal by the U.S. Postmaster General to eliminate Saturday mail delivery. America's confidence in the postal service is rooted in the concept of six-day-a-week, universal service that I experienced growing up – and in the knowledge that no matter how where you live, the mail will be delivered. As you know, many seniors and veterans receive their prescription medications through the mail and delivery of those medications often occurs on Saturdays when people are more likely to be home to accept these packages. That is one reason why Saturday deliveries play a particularly important role in our state. I, along with 194 of my House colleagues, am a cosponsor of a bipartisan resolution urging the Postal Service to do everything it can to continue 6-day mail delivery.

We have all suffered as a result of the economic recession, and the Postal Service is no exception. While I'm deeply concerned over the fiscal future of the U.S. Postal Service, eliminating Saturday delivery isn't the right answer. Eliminating Saturday delivery would save the USPS approximately \$3 billion per year but would unnecessarily harm the fabric of many rural communities across our state, for those who receive medication, Social Security checks, or veterans' benefits in the Saturday mail.

The Postmaster General claims that post offices already open on Saturdays will remain open and mail will be delivered to post office boxes in post offices. Unfortunately for the elderly and disabled, those who have a hard time getting around, and others who live far from their post office, that idea simply won't work. During our harsh winters, travelling to the post office is even

more difficult and any delay in delivery of medication or benefits could be critical. We need to provide the peace of mind that Saturday delivery will continue.

As we continue to search for solutions, I look forward to your input as I travel around the state. I will keep you updated on my efforts in Washington to ensure that South Dakotans who rely on Saturday delivery can continue to count on our Postal Service to deliver.